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REVIEWS

BOAS, FRANZ. *The Mind of Primitive Man*. Pp. x, 294. Price, \$1.50. New York: Macmillan Company.

The author, the well-known Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University, has done a genuine service by this admirable summary of existing information with reference to human types. Dr. Boas shares the prevailing belief that racial differences are largely superficial. Perhaps he is open to the criticism that he too dogmatically asserts this superficiality instead of pleading ignorance. His positivism will do much however to shatter the belief of the layman that his own type is essentially superior to all others.

The opening chapter is headed Racial Prejudices and contains a brief survey of modern civilization and a discussion of brain differences. The second chapter takes up the Influence of Environment from Human Types in which we are shown how quickly the body reacts to various forms, exercise and occupation. Attention is called to the changes the author believes he has found among recent immigrants to America. Chapter III discusses the Influence of Heredity in interesting fashion leading to the conclusion that "The differences between different types of men are, on the whole, small as compared to the range of variation in each type."

The keynote to Chapter IV, Mental Traits of Primitive Man, lies in the statement that "there can be no doubt that in the main the mental characteristics of man are the same all over the world." Standards vary. We evaluate time highly—to primitive man it has little value—hence we easily conclude that the difference is physical, whereas in reality it is social. His standards are different, but he may hold to them quite as tenaciously as we do to our own. Lacking his viewpoint, it is hard for us to do him justice.

As regards race, language and culture we need not assume "that there has been at any time a close correlation between these three phenomena." If this be true, it is evident that most of the older schemes of classification of men are mistaken. Certain traits seem to be universal and may date back to the origin of mankind. On the other hand, customs spread with great rapidity—the culture of tobacco, cassava, corn for instance. Race contacts must be known if the culture is to be explained. In all this has there been an evolution? If so it is not always from the simple to the complex. Witness music and language. Various groups of the same races are on widely different culture levels.

Civilized man and primitive man have very different concepts. "What seem to us conditions of an object—like health and sickness—are considered by him as independent realities." Our own explanations seldom go to bottom of the matter. The tradition of primitive man is founded on crude experience,—ours is increasingly based on experiment. Hence our categories differ and our types of explanation vary. This whole chapter, *Some Traits of Primitive Culture*, is most suggestive.

The last chapter deals with Race Problems in the United States. The author believes "that the concern that is felt by many in regard to the continuance of

racial purity of our nation is to a great extent imaginary . . ." "No evidence is available that would allow us to expect a lower status of the developing new types of America."

It would be well if every person now engaged in discussion of American problems would read and consider the valuable arguments here presented.

CARL KELSEY.

University of Pennsylvania.

BROCKWAY, Z. R. *Fifty Years of Prison Service*. Pp. xiii, 437. Price, \$2.00. New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1912.

This volume is a remarkable autobiographical story of a remarkable career. It is told in the straight-forward and convincing manner of a man who is conscious of a great mission; often misunderstood, sometimes maligned, but always conscious of great responsibility, and firm in the conviction that the cause to which he has conscientiously devoted his life will ultimately triumph.

To those who have observed Mr. Brockway's career and who have been thoughtful students of the revolutionary reforms in prison treatment which he instituted it is particularly interesting to peruse his narrative of the experiences which gave rise to his point of view.

He has sought in Part I to describe his own evolution. Incidents connected with his services in Westerfield Prison, Connecticut, Albany Penitentiary and Almshouse, Rochester Penitentiary and the Detroit House of Correction and Federal Prison, are related with a view, not only of describing the character of these institutions, but of revealing his own mental and religious development. His advocacy of the indeterminate sentence and the reform program are the outgrowth of his experiences. Part II is devoted to a description and explanation of Elmira Reformatory. Here he was able in twenty-five years to make practical demonstration of his theories which convinced the world of their practical utility. Out of experiences in dealing with federal prisoners in Detroit he arrived at the following conclusions: "That exercise of governing authority for the purpose of its own vindication is of doubtful use and very often harmful; that the assumption of individual moral accountability based on the doctrine of free volition is not always a justifiable assumption, but is often a fallacious view; and that for a reasoning intelligence, that which is reasonable may influence conduct more for moral rectitude than that which transcends the human reason, dwelling alone in the imagination" (p. 94). On the contrary, the formative value of good habits duly confirmed by the ennobling influence of established individual industrial efficiency far outweighs the value of retributive requital, moral maxims, personal persuasion or emotional evangelism. This principle he wrought into the Elmira plan and succeeded.

For those who will criticise the injection of the story of persecution and misrepresentation into the narrative, the sufficient answer will be that the book is an autobiography and not a mere treatment of the theory and practice of prison reform.

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